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Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : Mr. Merchant

DATE: June 6, 1959

FROM : Martin J. Hillenbrand

SUBJECT: Federal Presidential Elections in Berlin

In view of the continuing clamor over this subject and the way in which the Federal Republic is apparently handling the matter, I would recommend that the Secretary consider speaking firmly to Von Brentano at the next opportunity along the following lines:

(1) The question of the presidential election in Berlin appears to have been handled in the worst possible way. The effect seems to have been achieved of causing maximum confusion and discouragement in Berlin and of giving the East press an opportunity to make considerable propaganda capital.

(2) Despite disavowals which have been made, we have information from Bonn that the Foreign Office is still telling the press there about allied reservations as to holding the National Assembly meeting in Berlin. The impression continues to be prevalent that the major initiative in opposing holding the election in Berlin has come from the Western allies.

(3) The Federal Republic should clearly assume its responsibilities in this matter and make evident that the final decision taken by Gerstenmaier, whatever it may be, is basically that of the Federal Republic.

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